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# FOUR MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

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ARTHUR HAIRE FORSTER



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# FOUR MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

BY  
ARTHUR HAIRE FORSTER



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FOUR MODERN RELIGIOUS  
MOVEMENTS



# FOUR MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

## I

### SPIRITUALISM

A SPIRITUALIST ought to mean a person who believes in a spiritual order or environment to which man should adapt himself if he wishes to live the most real life. A materialist, on the other hand, is one who believes that it is only necessary for man to adapt himself to this present world since there is nothing beyond it. The materialist "sets his mind on the things that are upon the earth" because he has abandoned belief in a spiritual order. Every *Christian* is a spiritualist in the true sense of the term, but the word is now used chiefly of one who believes that the dead can and do communicate through mediums with the living. The first page of the Spiritualist's Hymn Book declares that "Spirit-

ualism is the science of life; of the manifestation of the spirit — the intercommunion of the people of earth and those on the other side." On the same page one of their principles is given as "the proven facts of communion between departed human spirits and mortals."

It would be better if the word spiritism were used for this theory; this word is, in fact, so used by the French. Spiritualism or spiritism may be said to be the exaggeration of the Christian doctrines of immortality and the communion of saints, but the exaggeration of a doctrine is often its corruption as well; the history of the Church of Rome contains many examples of that. However, as most modern spiritualists have had some Christian training, though usually it is a stupid and inadequate training, the corruptions are not yet very evident.

Spiritualism, like most other modern religious movements, is due to the Church's timidity, worldliness and want of intelligent teaching and propaganda. Spiritualists are uninstructed people looking for what the Church has left out. A spiritualist service consists in hymns, extempore prayer,

a trance address and "messages" from the dead given by a medium to some of those present. Seven or eight of the hymns in their book are well known to all Christians. "Nearer, My God, to Thee," for example, is one of them. The trance address is delivered by someone who professes to be inspired by a departed spirit. I have listened to one given by a pleasant and prosperous-looking old man with a white vest, whose inspirer, we were informed, was an Egyptian, dead many thousand years. The subject was the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and soon became an appeal to class jealousy. Spiritualism and a certain crude Socialism are often found in close alliance. The Rich Man of the parable, we were told, was in hell because he was rich. It did not seem to occur to the speaker or his inspirer that Abraham, who in the same parable is in Paradise, was also a rich man. We were also told that man is not fallen; yet it was not explained how, in that case, priests and rich men could be such villains as he represented them to be. The speaker also asserted that Christianity is merely Indian Buddhism in a new dress. This is a common theory among



many who know little about Buddhism and less about Christianity. Altogether one felt that the Egyptian might spend a few more centuries in the spirit world in improving his logic before he inspires anyone else.

The chief attraction at a spiritualist service is the "messages" from the dead given by the medium. At one, for instance, the medium alleged that she saw spirit figures hovering over certain persons and trying to give them advice. The advice was usually sensible enough — not to worry, not to wear black, to be careful of someone's health.

The "messages," however, do not always produce happy results. Raupert, in "The Dangers of Spiritualism," tells of a widow living near Paris who tied her two little children together and drowned them in a dirty pond in order to send them after another child which had died. This little child had spoken to her, she thought, at a seance and had told her that she was dull in the other world. The mother was probably afraid that her dead child might be lonely; the medium had read what was in her mind and given it as a



message from the other world. Most of the "messages" may be explained in that way, when they are not mere guesses by the medium, for people go to spiritualist services to hear and see "signs and wonders;" they go as sensation hunters; if there are none to be had, then they must be invented for them. No prodigy, no pay, is the natural attitude, and this, of course, puts a premium on fraud. Modern spiritualism is generally dated from 1847, when strange rappings were heard in the house of a man called Fox, living in the Township of Arcadia, New York State. The great excitement which these rappings caused was considerably cooled when one of Fox's daughters confessed that she made them by cracking her knee and toe joints. It was an unfortunate beginning for a new religion.

Some years later the University of Pennsylvania appointed a commission, the Seybert Commission, to examine "Spiritualism." This examination, it must be said, was not a complete one, but the secretary reported, after several experiments with mediums: "I have been forced to the conclusion that spiritualism, as far at least as it has

shown itself before me, presents the melancholy spectacle of gross fraud perpetrated upon an uncritical portion of the community." Spiritualism is not all fraud, but it flourishes because so many are so easily deceived and because so few know that its marvels can now be explained without supposing that the dead are communicating messages.

In England many spiritualist societies were formed in the middle of the last century and "messages" were received from famous personages. For example, in 1854 Shakespeare transmitted a fragment of a play on "The Death of Brennus." Here is one complete scene: "The Seige of Crosium — Brennus: 'On, soldiers, on!' (After an obstinate siege of six months, Crosium is taken with an immense slaughter.) Scene closes." Shakespeare can scarcely be said to have improved as a writer of plays since his death. A Newcastle (England) spiritualist circle had twenty kings and seven queens appearing at one sitting. Later on King David promised the same circle elementary lessons in Hebrew, and Noah gave interesting and curious details about the earth before the flood.

These incidents explain why Professor William James once said that what mankind at large most lacks is criticism and caution, not faith. But there are phenomena in "spiritualism" which cannot be explained by the fraud of mediums and the credulity of those who wait on them. In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research was founded to investigate these mysterious phenomena. Bishop Boyd-Carpenter of Ripon and Mr. Balfour have been presidents of this society, as well as many distinguished scientists and scholars. Some members have come to the conclusion that the dead do, under certain conditions, communicate with the living; others say the evidence is insufficient. In any case, the work of this society has shown that far more proof of "messages" from the dead is required than that offered at an ordinary spiritualist service.

It sometimes happens that the by-product from the manufacture of some article becomes more important than the article itself, and this is true of "spiritualism." Even if "messages" from the dead are not proved, the investigation of alleged messages has shown the marvels of the human

mind, especially of that part of it which is called the subliminal self. Subliminal means below the threshold. This subliminal self or under-mind was "discovered" by F. W. Myers, the author of a well-known poem on St. Paul. It is that tract of the mind which operates in dreams, and indeed the careful study of dreams has thrown much light on many of the alleged facts of spiritualism. An incident will show what this under-mind can do — or rather perceive. It is condensed from a story guaranteed by Miss Dougall in the recent volume of essays called "Immortality," by Canon Streeter and others.

"A Mrs. B., on her way to visit a medium or clairvoyant, called on a Miss A., who during the visit was thinking over certain striking events, events which, however, she never mentioned to Mrs. B. Mrs. B. soon returned and told Miss A. that the clairvoyant had been very uninteresting, having merely described a series of apparently meaningless visions. Miss A. was amazed to find that these visions were her own thoughts while Mrs. B. was with her on her first visit. Stranger still, the visions were introduced to the clairvoy-

ant's consciousness by a Chinaman in fine apparel. Now that morning Miss A. had been struck by the sight of two Chinamen coming down the steps of the Chinese Embassy in London; their Oriental dress had made an impression on her mind."

This incident seems to imply that Mrs. B.'s "under-mind" took, as it were, a photograph of the thoughts in Miss A.'s mind, and this mind-photograph was then developed by the medium in the form of visions. A medium, in fact, gives a dramatic reproduction of what is in her client's mind, just as a dream is a dramatic reproduction of what has been in one's own mind during the day. Thus we see how difficult it would be to prove that it is a discarnate or disembodied spirit who is giving the messages. The "revelations" of mediums and clairvoyants may nearly always be explained as readings from this life and no other. They might all come from the medium's "photographing," so to speak, other minds, and producing the results in a trance-state, or else they might come from the medium's own hidden memory. For this under-mind, it seems, has an almost infallible memory. There is, for example, a case of an old lady who



spoke Hindustani in her delirium, though she had left India at the age of four and had never learned the language. In another case, the alleged spirit turned out to be a character in a novel which had once been read to the medium, and when the medium makes a mistake, it has often been found that the mistake already exists in the client's own mind. So, as Mr. Hereward Carrington, an investigator of spiritualist phenomena, says: "Spirit messages may be the result of the activity of the secondary consciousness of the medium active at the time and passing itself off as a spirit — the supernatural knowledge displayed being gained by means of telepathy, clairvoyance and such supernatural processes and woven together by the medium's secondary consciousness to personate a spirit." Telepathy, mentioned by Mr. Carrington in this quotation, is the name for the fact that one mind can receive impressions from another mind at a distance without using the ordinary channels, such as speech; it is a kind of mental wireless telegraphy, and is regarded as proved by most investigators. Nearly everyone has had some experience of it; we can often know when others

are writing to us or when something has happened to one in whom we are interested. It has even been asserted that children may be influenced for good by whispering to them while they are asleep. In this way suggestions may be given to their subconscious minds which will afterwards bear fruit in better living. It is not always easy to distinguish clairvoyance from telepathy. Clairvoyance might be called "mental eyesight," as when a person can tell what a card is without looking at it.

Recent experiments in clairvoyance and telepathy warn us that we cannot accept alleged spirit messages too readily. It is safer to follow the advice of the Greek poet Epicharmus, "Be sober and distrustful; these are the sinews of the understanding," or of St. Paul, "Prove all things."

Spiritualism is growing in popularity owing to the general spiritual unrest accentuated by the war. Any system which promises to open communication with the departed is welcomed. But, as has been pointed out, the evidence for the reality of these communications is extremely doubtful. Much more care and criticism is required than such as is found at an ordinary spiritualist service.

The sorting of alleged messages is beyond the power of most of those who attend these services. Their infantile credulity hinders the discovery of truth, for if everything be believed the true can never be sifted from the false. As regards the moral effects of spiritualism, it is difficult to reach any conclusion as yet. The story of the early Christian Church shows that a firm belief in immortality leads to a belief in human brotherhood. It might, indeed, be maintained that democracy stands or falls with the belief in immortality. If men no longer believe in a life after death they will seize all they can in this world without regarding the rights of others; the Germans and the Bolsheviks have shown us that. To believe in a life after death is to lose the modern reverence for the man of wealth, for as the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus reminds us, the man of wealth may be a beggar in the other world. But spiritualists have not the monopoly of the doctrine of a future life; it is a fundamental Christian belief which the Church has allowed to fall into disuse, and it is a health-giving belief only when it comes



with communion with God and not from sensational seances.

Then a standard is needed in morality as in everything else, yet in spiritualism no standard is apparent. When Jesus is mentioned, it is often in a tone of patronage and of something like pity for those who make Him the Master of Life. The simpletons who run after the spirits will probably soon lose the Christian spirit. They yield to the flattering thought that they are broad-minded and "freed from the fetters of orthodoxy." They forget that orthodoxy means literally right-thinking, and they have not noticed that free thinking is often very loose thinking indeed. Furthermore, the effect of putting oneself in a passive state to receive "messages" cannot be healthy. In his book "Spiritualism and Insanity" Dr. Williams writes: "There is the serious injury to the mental organism which is bound to result from constantly getting into the habit of forcing the will to become perfectly passive." In the same work a doctor is quoted as saying that in six months he had twenty cases of insanity as the result of dab-

bling in spiritualism. Here, of course, it might be objected that these persons would have gone mad in any event, that they "dabbled in spiritualism" because they were mentally deficient; however, the fact is significant either way. Spiritualism is certainly a danger to that strengthening of distinct personalities which is a necessary aim of Christian discipline, and it is especially harmful to those whose other interests are too few and whose intellect is too narrow. None the less, the growth of spiritualism is a valuable warning to the historic church.

There is a story of a nurse who in her haste to throw out the dirty bath water threw out the baby too, so the Church, in throwing out abuses at the reformation, may have thrown out, in some instances, rightful uses. Spiritualism is perhaps her punishment for this unwise eviction.

"The real cause," Miss Dougall writes, "of the hold which spiritualism has on many religious minds is the failure of the Church to realize in practice the meaning of the communion of saints. The mediaeval Church failed on account of the un-Christian superstition which pictured the next

stage of existence as a state of mere torture and punishment. The reaction of the Protestant mind against mercenary prayers and ceremonies to relieve the misery of the souls in purgatory was healthy. But with this came in another superstition, that it was wrong to pray for the dead or to believe in their fellowship with the living. In so far as it is a reaction against this newer superstition, spiritualism shows a healthy instinct. But the methods employed by spiritualists to bridge with friendly overtures the stream of death appear to be mistaken, and therefore dangerous. They are at best only a roundabout way of obtaining a sense of companionship with those who have passed on, since the same sense of companionship might be obtained better and more easily by prayer. Then, too, when this sense of companionship is attained in the spiritualistic seance or by some private automatic means, it is inevitably mixed with and confused by communications from the inner mind of the medium or agent, which is always subject to telepathic intrusions from — none can tell whom."

If this be so, then the true answer to spiritual-

ism is to recover within the Church that victorious attitude which marked the early Christians when they faced the fact of death, and to recover too their sense of companionship with their dead which is shown in their prayers. Our mourning and our tombstones do not exhibit this victory over death: they look more like defeat.

Having ceased to pray for the departed, we have come to think that they are really dead to us, whereas they are, perhaps, nearer than we know.

## II

### CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

**I**N 1862 Mrs. Patterson, formerly Mrs. Glover and afterwards Mrs. Eddy, went to consult a doctor called Quimby at Portland, Maine. This incident is the real beginning of Christian Science. Dr. Quimby helped Mrs. Patterson by mental suggestion, not by medicine, and gave her the idea which she afterward developed into "Christian Science." He described his method as follows: "I give no medicine. I tell the patient his troubles and what he thinks is the disease and my explanation is the cure. If I succeed in correcting his errors, I change the fluids of the system and establish the truth or health. The truth is the cure. The greatest evil that follows taking an opinion for a truth is disease. . . . Disease is our error and the work of the devil." This method, he called "Science of Health." It is similar to what is now known as "psycho-therapeutics," a



long word which merely means "mind-cure," or treatment of the sick by influencing the mental life. It was familiar to Plato four hundred years before Christ. "The well regulated soul," he wrote, "by its authoritative power, maintains the body in perfect health." Dr. Quimby had two other patients who borrowed and expanded his ideas. One was J. A. Dresser, the leader of the "New Thought" movement, the other W. F. Evans, a Swedenborgian clergyman, who published a book, "The Mental Cure," in 1869, six years before Mrs. Eddy's more famous "Science and Health."

Quimby's theory was briefly "Disease is in its root a wrong belief, change that belief and we cure the disease." Mrs. Eddy went further and said that bodies have no real existence, therefore, of course, neither have their ailments. Strangely enough she discovered "Christian Science" in 1866, the year in which Dr. Quimby died. The relation of mind to matter and the nature of matter are old problems in philosophy and physical science. Mrs. Eddy settled them very simply by announcing that there is no such thing as matter. A true philosophy should account for all the facts;

Mrs. Eddy threw any inconvenient facts away. The human mind may be compared to a drunken man on a horse who, in trying to avoid falling off on the right side, falls off on the left. Materialism, the theory that matter is everything, was popular in her time; she swayed over to the other side and fell off into the dogma that matter is nothing. That we suppose there is a material world is the result or creation of what Mrs. Eddy calls "mortal mind." She does not make it very clear how this "mortal mind," which is nothing and yet has created the physical universe, came to be. The search for an answer to this question in her writings has been described as "taking a long walk to catch a mist." Matter, no doubt, is not so gross as was once supposed. We are now told that it is essentially "units of electric force." It is, in fact, more easy to believe in matter as the manifestation of mind than ever before, yet matter as a manifestation, as a "Divine Language" is very different from matter as non-existent. Those who wish to understand Mrs. Eddy's philosophy will find a fair criticism of it in "The Truth and Error of Christian Science," by Miss Sturge. Its philos-

ophy is one of the attractions of "Christian Science"—for those who have not had a training in philosophy.

The text-book of "Christian Science" is Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health with key to the Scriptures," a book which has been issued in more than four hundred editions. The cheapest copy advertised costs three dollars, so that the poor are shut out from the benefits of reading it, unless they borrow a copy, as I did. The Key to the Scriptures is an explanation of the first chapters of Genesis and some chapters of the Revelation. These are difficult parts of the Bible, but Mrs. Eddy says they are transparent to her and proceeds to inform us in the glossary of her book that the river Gihon (Genesis 2:13) means "the rights of woman, acknowledged morally, civilly and socially," while the river Hiddekel is "Divine Science understood and acknowledged." The Holy Ghost is also "Divine Science," and so, as things which are equal to the same are equal to one another, the river Hiddekel must be the Holy Ghost. In addition, the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer are explained. The Lord's Prayer is used at "Chris-



tian Science" services, but the reader inserts Mrs. Eddy's "improvement" after each petition. For example, "Give us this day our daily bread," means, we are told, "Give us grace for to-day, feed the famished affections." Christ, it seems, was too *material* for Mrs. Eddy. If we must have an addition, the child's — in Hans Andersen's story, is perhaps the truest to the original meaning — "give us this day our daily bread, with plenty of butter on it." Mrs. Eddy's comment on the words of Jesus, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," is "Here the word hands is used metaphorically." Comment on this comment is scarcely needed. Of the first part of the book "Science and Health" Miss Sturge writes, "It abounds in contradictions, not only to be found in the same page, the same paragraph, the same sentence, but often between two words used consecutively."

Yet, in spite of Mrs. Eddy's cheap and confused philosophy, or perhaps we should call it metaphysics, many are cured by "Christian Science." This, however, does not prove the truth of her theories, as she seems to imagine. Mental heal-

ing can be traced back for three thousand years and has been connected with the strangest theories. For example, in the seventeenth century, Valentine Greatrakes healed many in Ireland without medicine, though he maintained that all diseases were due to evil spirits. The theory is not of great consequence, though, of course, a true theory is better than an absurd one. What matters is the patient's faith. The power of an idea, if it be firmly held, can cure many diseases. "Christian Science," says Sir William Osler, "is probably nothing more than mental suggestion under another name." The mind of man has more power than is generally admitted, and is wider than we are aware of. It may be compared to an iceberg, of which the greater part is under water. This unknown part, this undermind, which is at work in our dreams, is also at work on our health, and suggestions given to it from our conscious waking minds or from others can rouse it to heal, for mind and body are most closely connected, as may be seen when someone blushes as the result of a thought or of another's word. A patient may be literally "saved by hope," hope inspired by an-

other's words or by his own faith. This is the truth which Mrs. Eddy seized upon and distorted. She tried to make a monopoly of a universal principle. The mistake, often a disastrous mistake of the Christian Scientists, is to apply this principle to all cases. A simple operation might have saved many who have become permanently maimed or who have died under Christian Science treatment. So Dr. Stephen Paget in his book, "The Faith and Works of Christian Science," can say of them, "They bully dying women and let babies die in pain; they rob the epileptic of their bromide, the heart cases of their digitalis; let appendicitis go on to septic peritonitis, gastric ulcer to perforation of the stomach; compel them who should be kept still to take exercise and withhold from all cases of cancer all hope of cure. To these works of the devil they bring their one gift, wilful and complete ignorance, and their nursing would be a farce, if it were not a tragedy." Drugs, according to "Christian Science," only act because they are expected to have certain effects; but drugs act on frogs — what are the metaphysical or religious theories of frogs? Would a

Christian Scientist take an ounce of prussic acid and trust to his belief that it would have no effect, to save him? Doctors, it is true, do not give drugs as much as they used to do; but for certain diseases, certain drugs are always given, because the doctor knows that drugs, like mental suggestion, are means by which nature may be helped to do the work which nothing can do for her.

Dr. Paget quotes one rather ludicrous case, sent him by a doctor to illustrate Christian Science methods. The doctor was consulted by a man who had, for nearly a year, been treated by Christian Scientists for deafness without any improvement. He examined the ear, removed a pledget of cotton and some wax, and the hearing was promptly restored.

An American doctor wrote to Paget, "I should say I had seen about a hundred cases in which the only chance for cure had been lost through the Christian Science treatment."

At the end of "Science and Health," and also in Christian Science papers, there are testimonies by those who have been cured through Christian Science. No doubt many of these cures are genu-

ine, but they are not due to anything peculiar to Christian Science. They might occur equally well in the Church if that body had not forgotten the truth which Mrs. Eddy has distorted. Yet, in studying these testimonies of cure, it is impossible always to be sure that the patient really suffered from the disease of which he claims to have been cured. "There are few things," says Dr. Porritt, "upon which so little reliance can be placed as a patient's own estimate of his symptoms or the nature of his illness. Knowing this, doctors rarely treat themselves."

These testimonies of cure make Christian Science resemble a new patent medicine, advertised with pictures of those who have tried it and recovered. But neither Christian Scientists nor the patent medicine advertisers give us a list of those who have tried their treatments and not recovered. "There is," says Dr. Paget, "but one way to get at the truth about a new method of medical or surgical treatment, *every case must be reported.*"

In theology Mrs. Eddy revived, though probably without knowing it, the heresy of Cerinthus, a theory about Jesus which the Church rejected as



an insufficient and misleading interpretation. St. John is said to have written his gospel in answer to Cerinthus. "The word became *flesh* and dwelt among us" was not spiritual enough for Cerinthus and Mrs. Eddy. In the *Herald of Christian Science* for April, 1918, there is published a sermon of Mrs. Eddy's. Here is a sentence from it, "Jesus was not Christ; Christ was but another name for God, and it was an honorary title bestowed on Jesus for His great goodness. In the original texts the term God took its origin from the word good—hence the term Christ Jesus, a good man."

The only explanation which I can see of this astonishing sentence is that Mrs. Eddy is confusing the Greek word *Chrestos*, good, with the Greek word *Christos*, Christ or Messiah or Anointed. But theological speculation without a knowledge of Greek has led far greater minds than Mrs. Eddy's into absurdities. Christian Scientists are increasing in numbers and will increase much more unless the Church emphasizes the truth which, mixed with many errors, Mrs. Eddy taught. Christianity is a gospel for the

body as well as for the soul. This has often been overlooked, and in the Christian Science movement the Church is suffering the vengeance of a forgotten truth. In fact, almost all sects are due to the Church's neglect of some part of the Catholic Faith. "When the historic Church forgets, new bodies arise to remind her." Amongst others, doctors are stimulating the Church to action. In the *British Medical Journal* of June 18th, 1910, Sir Clifford Allbutt wrote: "Probably no limb, no viscus is so far a vessel of dishonour as to be wholly outside the renewals of the spirit."

Sir Dyce Duckworth, who was senior physician at St. Bartholomew's, London, for many years, has said, "I will express my opinion that our 20th century Christendom is generally lax and feeble in offering earnest prayers for the sick in all stages and for a blessing on the remedial means employed. We should look to a Higher Power than that of man to aid at the bedside. . . . I see no objection to the practice of unction and laying on of hands by Christian ministers for those who desire it." Even the Bishops of the Lambeth Conference of 1908 declared that "sickness has too

often exclusively been regarded as a cross to be borne with passive resignation, whereas it should have been regarded as a weakness to be overcome by the power of the spirit." A bishop, it may be mentioned, is instructed at his consecration to "heal the sick," yet we seldom hear of them doing it.

The Communion Service, again, is plainly intended to be a strengthening of the body as well as of the spirit, as the words "preserve thy body" indicate. In some of the old liturgies, this is even clearer, for example, "make all who communicate to receive a medicine of life for the healing of any sickness" is a prayer in Bishop Serapion's Sacramentary. The New Testament has many allusions to God's power to heal the body. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick" St. James writes.

This part of Christianity can, no doubt, be exaggerated. Bodily health is not everything; its absence may be a benefit. St. Paul's mission to the Galatians was the result of an illness. St. Paul was not healed, though he was given strength to bear his "thorn in the flesh." After all, as Dr.



Paget asks, "Are we worth being well?" How would we use perfect health if we had it? Yet, none the less, Christ showed Himself as a Healer of men's bodies and we sometimes sing in church, "Thy touch has still its ancient power."

Christian Science, then, reminds us that Christianity is a gospel for the body; there is also something to be learned from a Christian Science service. The whole congregation is the choir, there is a period for silent prayer, and many may think it a good point that there is no sermon.

Among Christian Scientists women are regarded at least as men's equals. They have got rid of the Oriental attitude to women which still lurks in the Church as a part of her Jewish heritage. Their theology is "heretical," yet there is among them a sense of the presence and spirituality and law of God which, like the note of a great bell, brings quiet into their lives. They show that nervous strain can be removed by lifting the mind in meditation on the Universal Life of God.

Three books written to expose the errors of Christian Science mention these good points in it:

(1) As a novel and militant heterodoxy

against a narrow and inadequate orthodoxy it is forcing men from the old ruts.

(2) It has changed the tone of life of many self-pitying people.

(3) It exhibits "The victory of mind over its tyrants, fear and anger."

A Frenchman once said that the ancient Romans conquered the world because they could learn from their enemies and because their soldiers kept their sacramentum or military oath. This remark is not without its meaning for the Christian Church.

### III

#### THEOSOPHY

A THEOSOPHIST has been compared to a man who fights with his back to a spring door, behind which he can disappear when the interview becomes unpleasant. That is to say, when any doctrine of his is found indefensible, he has only to declare that it is no part of Theosophy. Theosophy, in fact, is more like a cloud than a creed, it is vague in outline and changeable in form, perhaps, too, it keeps the sunshine from those who are under it. One doctrine, however, is found in all Theosophical books and is, I think, held by all Theosophists. This doctrine is Reincarnation. "The doctrine of Reincarnation," says Mrs. Besant, a leading Theosophist, "is the very core and essence of Theosophy." Reincarnation means "that the growth and development of the human soul is accomplished by means of successive returns to physical life with intervening periods of rest." It differs from transmigration,

which means the return of human beings as animals, as well as in the bodies of men and women. Reincarnation is therefore merely an improvement on transmigration, and belief in transmigration seems to develop, when an ethical religion, a religion with a standard of conduct and a system of rewards and punishments, comes in contact with a decaying Totemism. The underlying idea in Totemism is that of a life shared in common by the human and animal creation.

Mrs. Besant asserts that Christ accepted Reincarnation. The proof she offers is that he told his disciples that John the Baptist was Elijah. The saying referred to is in St. Matthew 17:12 and 13 and certainly does not mean that the Baptist was Elijah reincarnate, but rather that he prepared the way for Christ "in the spirit and power of Elijah." See St. Luke 1:17. Furthermore the saying suggests that the treatment of John by Herod and Herodias was, as it were, a repetition of the treatment of Elijah by Ahab and Jezebel. Theosophists also say that St. Matthew 16:14 implies a belief in reincarnation, but the return of great historical figures at particular crises

is not reincarnation, even supposing that such a return ever really happened. Another proof of belief in reincarnation is found by Theosophists in St. John 9:2. The question there might mean that the people held that doctrine; it does not show that Christ did. More probably, it is an example of the Jewish belief that even an unborn child can commit sin.

Theosophists maintain that reincarnation explains the inequalities of life. Our condition in this life is, they say, the result of our past lives and our condition in future lives will depend on our conduct in this one. Conduct is a seed which we sow in one life and must reap in the next. This law of cause and effect is known as Karma, pronounced Kurma, a Hindu word meaning action. Like much else in Theosophy it is borrowed from India, where it has been accepted from about the sixth century before Christ up to the present day. It is summed up in the Hindu proverb:

“ Who plants mangoes, mangoes shall he eat,  
Who plants thorn bushes, thorns shall wound his  
feet.”



The Christian parallel is the doctrine that "what a man sows, that shall he also reap." The difference consists in a conscious reaping in this life or in the spirit world of what one has sown,—as for instance David did in the Old Testament story or the rich man in Christ's parable and the theory that we must pay for unknown, unremembered acts in another life on earth. Karma in its working, is as if a father were to wake his children in the middle of the night and whip them silently for forgotten faults of the past day. This would be a method of education of doubtful value.

The following points may be noticed in connection with the doctrine of reincarnation and the theory of Karma which is closely bound up with it.

(1) There is no satisfactory evidence. Theosophists say that sudden friendships and infant prodigies are evidence, but if it be true, there should be more of both and infant prodigies are prodigies only in music and numbers, not in science or philosophy. This merely means that the operations of the mind that have to do with numbers are often developed early. It may be mentioned that reincarnation does much to deprive children



of their charm and freshness. According to this theory, a child is only like an old man who has lost his memory. Mrs. Besant says that she was a Brahmin, that is, a member of the Hindu priestly caste, in a previous life; we have only her own word for this and if it be true, he must have been a Brahmin of evil life, for in Hinduism, it is a punishment to be reborn as a woman. (2) It implies that there are no disturbing elements, as if a seed must grow no matter what the soil and weather be; this is unscientific. In real life the consequences of actions are indeterminate and vary greatly according to circumstances. (3) It leads to callousness and fatalism. If Belgian children, spitted on German bayonets, are only reaping the fruit of sins committed in their past lives, why should we be indignant at such outrages? The Germans are only the agents of these children's already determined destinies. We may, of course, by helping others, make good Karma for ourselves, we may "acquire merit," but help rendered from that motive is a cold and calculating thing. (4) In India, it puts caste on a religious basis, and caste or the system of strict class dis-

tinctions is one of the great social evils of that country. Reincarnation and Karma cannot, therefore, be logically held along with belief in a real brotherhood of man, though Theosophists try to combine these doctrines. (5) It is materialistic; if evil is to be rewarded by poverty and good by prosperity, then the moral and the material are hopelessly confused; we are back among the ideas which the Book of Job was written to refute. Moreover, according to the theory of Karma, Jesus must have committed atrocious crimes in a previous life to deserve a life of poverty ended by crucifixion. (6) It implies that evil governs the world, else why is release from Karma the aim of Hindu religion. This last fact seems to show that Hinduism itself is an implied criticism of the doctrine of Karma. (7) It gives no help in accounting for the origin of evil; it only puts the origin further back. (8) It opposes the teaching of Jesus, who declared that we cannot argue from calamity to guilt. Suffering follows sin, but owing to the unity of mankind, the suffering falls on the innocent as much as, even more, than on the guilty. (9) It has no great influence on charac-

ter, because it is vindictive not reformatory, and therefore it is a method of punishment which civilised men have abandoned. This is well explained in the essay on Theosophy by Miss Dougall in "Immortality and other Essays." Sin is removed, she argues, when the injury is made good and the sinner made righteous, but the suffering of the sinner does not do this, not even when he knows the reason of his suffering. It is personal influence that leads to that repentance or change of mind which really removes sin. Sinners become more degraded the more they sin, they do not necessarily suffer more and so the doctrine of Karma is bad psychology and bad "justice" too, for according to it, the suffering becomes more and more severe, while the sufferers become more and more unable to profit by it. (10) It leaves no room for any real union between the individual purposes of men and the universal purpose or meaning of existence. It represents us as men in separate cells in a prison, each working out his term; that is, it is an unsocial system. It makes expiation, judgment, the only purpose of the world process; it is therefore un-Chris-

tian, for Christianity affirms that God's purpose is not to dispense judgment, but to educate a race of beings into likeness to Himself. (11) It leaves no room for forgiveness and so between the doctrine of Karma and the gospel of the Love of God, there stands a great gulf fixed. Compare, for instance, the last three verses of the 8th Chapter of Romans with this Hindu folk song composed by a believer in Reincarnation and Karma.

“ How many births are past, I cannot tell,  
How many yet to come, no man can say,  
But this alone I know and know full well,  
That pain and grief embitter all the way.”

The author of a pamphlet “ Elementary Theosophy ” writes that “ Reincarnation simply but grandly solves for us the riddle of the painful earth.” It may for some people, yet the evidence is quite inconclusive and it is not clear why man must come back to earth again and again for his spiritual benefit, with a new body and no memory of past mistakes. The doctrine seems greatly to overrate this earth as a field for spiritual growth.

(See Karma and Redemption, by A. G. Hogg, of Madras.)

Theosophists are not content with belief in reincarnation and Karma. They have drawn up a time-table, as it were, of the round trip through thousands of lives. "A Primer of Theosophy" tells us that "the process of evolution upon the earth, as well as all other worlds, is by seven successive waves of life-giving energy, which it has been agreed to call rounds and during each of these stages of evolution, seven races, with many subdivisions, inhabit the earth. . . . Four times that great wave of evolutionary force has swept over the earth and four great races have passed away. The present humanity is the fifth division of the fifth race." There are indeed more things in Theosophy than are dreamt of in heaven or earth. When it is asked: What is the evidence for all this, the answer is that it is the teaching of Mahatmas. Mahatmas or Initiates or Adepts or Masters are beings who have evolved to great heights, but remain in touch with humanity that they may help its development and teach Theosophists.

Madame Blavatsky, a founder of the Theo-



sophical Society, said that she used to meet some of these Mahatmas in Tibet and she professed to get letters from them. After her death, her successor (Mrs. Besant) received letters in the same hand writing and welcomed them as from a Mahatma, until she satisfied herself that they were being forged by Mr. Judge, another leader among Theosophists. On this incident, which led to a division in the Theosophical Society, the *Westminster Gazette* of October 29th, 1891, commented thus: "It is a queer enough spectacle to see Mrs. Besant who regretted that her strict intellect could not accept miracles on the Christian evidence greedily swallowing the precipitated revelations of the Mahatma.

This theory of Mahatmas gave Madame Blavatsky trouble too. "Every earnest Theosophist," she writes in the "Key to Theosophy," "regrets to-day from the bottom of his heart that these sacred names and things have ever been mentioned before the public and fervently wishes that they had been kept secret within a small circle of trusted and devoted friends."

Theosophists have taken this hint and talk more



now of their own investigations made on super-physical planes and less of revelations from Mahatmas. The results of these investigations are, some of them, interesting enough. However, it is necessary to examine carefully the evidence for their reality, to consider the qualifications of those who make the investigations, to ask how their discoveries agree with what we know already.

Though the English may be questionable, the sentiment is sound in the following paragraph from an Indian paper, the *Indu Prakash*: "Even if Mahatmas and their specially favoured associates of lower planes, moving among us do exist, we, for one, would strongly deprecate any sane man of healthy intellect surrendering his reason and conscience unto them, and becoming merely the gramophones repeating time-worn shibboleths as so many parading Theosophists do."

The motto of the Theosophical Society: "There is no religion higher than truth," is one that must appeal to all Christians for, as Pascal said, "The first of all Christian truths is that truth must be loved above all," yet when "The Key to Theosophy" interprets the parable of the

vine and the branches in St. John 15 by asserting that "each branch represents a new incarnation" we are forced to conclude that truth is one thing and Theosophical truth another and a different thing.

Modern Theosophy is the result of contact between the Orient and the West. Theosophists are usually people who have been attracted by Oriental religious systems, especially Hinduism, and who have then made for themselves a kind of essence out of all religions and named it Theosophy. Their theory is that all religions are essentially one, that behind all differences there is an inner meaning, a "secret doctrine" which only good Theosophists know. "Theosophy," according to a Primer of the subject, "is the body of truths which form the basis of all religions and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any." Hence it is sometimes called "the religion of religions."

"The Key to Theosophy" asserts that it is "the essence of all religion and of absolute truth." What may perhaps be called the Bible of Theosophists is "The Secret Doctrine," by Madame Bla-

vatsky. As an example of how Theosophy illuminates Christianity, this quotation from Volume I, page 574, of "The Secret Doctrine" is worthy of notice: "When He (Jesus) is made to say — 'I ascend to my Father and your Father' — it was simply to show that the group of his disciples and followers attracted to Him belonged to the same Dhyani Buddha, 'Star,' or 'Father,' again of the same planetary realm, as He did." This reminds one of the student who said that he had mastered his textbook and hoped soon to be able to understand the notes explaining it.

The Theosophical theory that we can find the highest common factor or greatest common measure of all religions and make from it a universal religion was popular in the eighteenth century, but is not easy to maintain now, because it is in essential points such as the ideas of God and of Salvation that religions differ most.

For instance, the moral teaching, the Ethics of Christianity and Buddhism are like in many respects. Some Buddhist sayings are very Christ-like, such as "Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, hatred ceases by love" and "What is

the use of platted hair, O fool! What of the raiment of goatskins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean," yet when the doctrines of God and salvation are compared, the difference is complete. Christian salvation is fellowship with God in the voluntary service of absolute good; Buddhist salvation is Nirvana, the state of a blown-out flame, meaning either utter extinction or a passive state of mind which some people might say resembled idiocy.

The Christian works for the Kingdom of God, the Buddhist works for his own Nirvana, a great distinction. Again Buddha recognised no supreme God, while Christianity is nothing else than an overwhelming, exultant idea of God. It may not now be said that Christianity is an enclosure containing all truths, while in other religions there is nothing but falsehood, yet the Christian must be able to show that Christianity is the focus which draws all the rays of truth and beauty from other religions and fulfils all that is worthy in them.

Theosophists are the most tolerant of people, a natural result of their notion that the secret doctrine of all religions is the same. Christians, how-

ever, believing that Christianity is the crown and goal of other religions must be intolerant. Christianity, in one single point, is like Pan-Germanism; it aims at world-dominion. Every missionary is a proof of the intolerance of Christianity, and so it is not surprising that Theosophists are unfavourable to Christian missions. In the "Key to Theosophy," we read of "those sincere but vain-glorious fools, the missionaries, who have sacrificed their lives in the South Sea islands or China. . . . What good have they done? They went in one case to those who were not yet ripe for any truth; and in the other to a nation whose systems of religious philosophy are as grand as any."

This statement may be compared with the testimony of Darwin, the naturalist, after his visit to the South seas. "The lesson of the missionary is the enchanter's wand" and also with the testimony of the United States ambassador to China in 1895. "No one can controvert the patent fact that the Chinese are enormously benefited by the labours of the missionaries in their midst."

Opposition to missions is not the only way in which Theosophists show their "tolerance."



Fraud and immorality are no bar to high office in the Theosophical Society. One of the two founders of this Society was Madame Blavatsky, the daughter of a Russian called Hahn. This woman, the author of the "Key to Theosophy" gave exhibitions of magic in India. They attracted great attention until the Society for Psychological Research held an investigation in Madras in 1884 and pronounced the performance to be fraudulent. The case may be read in Volume 3 of the Proceedings of that Society. Theosophists, however, are too tolerant to allow this to dim her light and Madame Blavatsky is regarded by them with almost as much reverence as is Mrs. Eddy by Christian Scientists.

In her "Key to Theosophy" this question and answer is found: "Enquirer — Do you believe in prayer and do you ever pray? Theosophist — We do not, we act instead of talk." Madame Blavatsky certainly could act.

I have heard a Theosophical lecturer say that one must be careful in quoting Madame Blavatsky as she approved of blinds or camouflage in her statements. Here is an instance: The glossary



of the Key contains an explanation of the word Christ or Chrestos as Madame Blavatsky prefers it. In this note, Lactantius, a Latin writer of the third century, is quoted as saying in his fourth book, chapter 7: "It is only through ignorance that men call themselves Christians instead of Chrestians." The only sentence in book 4, chapter 7, which in the least resembles this quotation is, "But the meaning of the name Christ must be set forth on account of the error of the ignorant, who by the change of a letter are accustomed to call him Chrestos." Madame Blavatsky's pretended quotation is therefore the exact opposite of what Lactantius said. This is indeed camouflage. Let this suffice for the character and accuracy of Madame Blavatsky. Those who wish to learn more about her will find an account in "A Modern Priestess of Isis," by Solovyoff (translated by W. Leaf).

Another light among Theosophists is Mr. C. W. Leadbeater. This man was guardian of a Hindu boy, Krishnamurthi, who was being trained to be a new Messiah. The father of the boy took an action to recover possession of him and won

his case. The report of the trial said, " In regard to Mr. Leadbeater, His Lordship observed that in the witness box he admitted that he held what his Lordship would only describe as frankly immoral opinions. No father could be obliged to confide in the promises of such a person." Mr. Leadbeater has written a book called " The Christian Creed "; one gem may be extracted from this work. " The clause usually translated — suffered under Pontius Pilate — should be rendered — He endured the dense sea." Theosophists often resemble that Irish judge of whom it was said that he would believe anything except an article of the Christian Faith.

That short and simple clause — suffered under Pontius Pilate — marks one of the great distinctions between Christianity and Theosophy and also between Christianity and Hinduism, the nursery of Theosophy.

To Hinduism, God is reposeful intelligence; to Christianity and to the religion of the Old Testament, God is essentially will, He fulfils Himself through historical acts. Christianity might be termed the religious interpretation of history, it is

concrete — not abstract, it centres on the fact of Christ who “suffered under Pontius Pilate” at a certain date in a certain province of the Roman Empire. Bishop Westcott once expressed it thus: “The thoughts by which other religions live are seen in Christianity as facts of human history.”

St. Paul's use of the word Theosophy in I Corinthians I:24 well summarises the difference between Christianity as *the* historical religion and that vague and cloudy system known as Modern Theosophy. “We preach Christ crucified,” he writes, “a stumbling-block to the Jews, sheer folly to the Gentiles, but for those who are called, whether Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the Power of God and the *Wisdom of God*.” The Greek for “Wisdom of God” is Theosophy.

## IV

### THE MORMONS OR LATTER DAY SAINTS

**A**T Cardston, in Southern Alberta, the Mormons have built a "million dollar" temple to be the centre of their propaganda in Canada. Much of the land in the neighbourhood has passed into their control and they will probably own more before long. Alberta, as may be seen from the map, is the part of Canada nearest to Utah, their headquarters in the United States. Who, then, are the Mormons? They are the followers of Joseph Smith, Junior, a native of Vermont, who was born in the year of Trafalgar, 1805, and was murdered by a mob at Carthage, Ill., in 1844.

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is," said Smith, "the only true and living church in existence. All other religions are wrong, all other religious bodies are corrupt." He asserted that the gospel was taken from the earth in the third or fourth century, and only restored through himself.

Joseph Smith was not remarkable for modesty, indeed, in his later life, he rivalled the Kaiser in his claims. In 1843 he announced, "I know more than all the world put together. . . . I combat the error of ages. . . . I solve the mathematical problems of universities with truth, diamond truth, and God is my right-hand man."

The success of the Mormons is largely due to arrogant claims such as these, for the majority of mankind is credulous and uncritical. As the White Queen says, in "Alice Through the Looking Glass," by drawing a long breath and shutting one's eyes, one can believe impossible things.

Why are the followers of Joseph Smith, Junior, called Mormons? From Mormon, a general and historian, who is said to have flourished in America in the fourth century after Christ and to have written an abridged history of his race, which was buried by his son Moroni and discovered in 1827 by Smith, who translated it into English.

This abridged history is now known as the Book of Mormon. The name Mormon, Smith explained, is derived from the Egyptian word, mon, meaning good, with the addition of more, con-



tracted to mor, hence Mormon means more good. It may be mentioned that the English word, "more," was not in existence in the time of Mormon's alleged existence, and even if it were, how did Mormon's father and mother come to know English? According to Smith, the Book of Mormon was written on gold plates in "reformed Egyptian" characters and translated by him, with the aid of the Urim and Thummim; the latter, from his description, seem to have been very similar to two prisms of a chandelier. A copy of some of the characters on these plates was shown to Professor Anthon, a distinguished American classical scholar. In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Coit, dated April 3rd, 1841, Professor Anthon says of these characters: "A very brief examination of the paper convinced me that it was a mere hoax, and a very clumsy one too."

A transcription of these characters is still in existence, and it may be seen that they could easily have been formed by Joseph Smith from a recollection of the Indian symbols cut on tombstones in his neighbourhood, and from the astronomical signs which are often found in a farmer's almanac.



The original gold plates were, unfortunately, removed by the angel who revealed them to Joseph Smith, Junior. The doctrines of the Book of Mormon are those popular in Smith's part of the country when he was a boy. He grew up in a turmoil of sects, and it is not surprising that, when there were so many confusing doctrines around him, he should have thought of establishing a sect of his own, and that fragments of these various doctrines should have found their way into his book. The book indeed is full of "local colour." Beginning in 1826, there was a widespread anti-Masonic crusade in the States; in the Book of Mormon, published in 1830, there is a violent attack on secret societies. Moreover, the main idea of the Book of Mormon, that the Red Indians are the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, was very popular in Smith's time, and was the subject of many books and sermons. Again, the dream of Lehi, in the Book of Mormon, is remarkably like a dream of Joseph Smith's own father, related in "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith and his Progenitors," by his mother, Lucy Smith.

A Mormon elder says of the Book of Mormon:

“In its pages there are no anachronisms and no contradictions.” “Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations,” Joseph Smith declared, “and where is our religion?” “We believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God,” is the eighth of the Mormon articles of faith.

These are rash statements, for several glaring anachronisms have been pointed out by Bishop Jones of Utah. The Book professes to be an account of — (1) The Jaredites, who left the tower of Babel at the time of the confusion of tongues and came to America in barges, but owing to internal dissensions became extinct; (2) The Nephites, a colony of Jews under Lehi, who left Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah, 597 before Christ, and landed on the western coast of South America. After the death of Lehi, these people divided and were known as Nephites and Lamanites. The Nephites established prosperous commonwealths, but the Lamanites fell under the curse of darkness, became dark in skin and degenerated into the Red Indians, who are their lineal descendants. The final struggle between these two peoples resulted in the destruction

of the Nephites about 400 A. D., but not before their records had been abridged by Mormon and hidden by his son, Moroni, for Joseph Smith to find and translate in the nineteenth century. As Bishop Jones shows, this remarkable story has some equally remarkable flaws. For example, the Book of Mormon quotes Isaiah, chapter 48-54, as being among the writings carried away from Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah, but these chapters could not have been written until nearly fifty years later, so the Nephites must have carried away writings which were not yet in existence. Again, the Nephites, who left Jerusalem about 600 B. C., according to the Book of Mormon, had in America synagogues "built after the manner of the Jews." Now, synagogues are not mentioned among the Jews until 200 B. C., so once more the Nephites seem to have succeeded in bringing from Jerusalem something which was not there; in this case, the synagogue system. These are only two points, and there are several other impossibilities in the Book of Mormon. It is, indeed, a very shaky foundation on which to build "The only true and living church in existence." The theory

that the Book of Mormon is based on an unpublished story by a man called Spaulding has strong evidence to support it and has not been disproved by the discovery in Honolulu of a manuscript story by Spaulding which does not resemble the Book of Mormon, for Spaulding wrote more than one romance. The evidence may be read in "The True Origin of the Book of Mormon," by Shook (Standard Pub. Co., Cincinnati).

Mormons are of two kinds: The Utah Mormons and the Iowa Mormons. The Iowa Mormons, who call themselves "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," separated from the Utah Mormons on the question of polygamy or plural marriage. They have a church in Toronto and one of their bishops used to preach throughout the winter on Sunday evenings in one of the city theatres. The sermon was usually "scriptural," with scarcely any reference to Mormon fancies, perhaps a hurried allusion to the restoration of the gospel to earth in 1830 — the birth year of Mormonism. There also were on occasions some plaintive remarks on the fact that the papers will not report his sermons, some

appeals to patriotic sentiment and for a large collection, and a reminder that there would be a baptismal service during the week at the Mormon church. Some inoffensive hymns were sung from the "Saints Hymnal," but not the one in which the Book of Mormon is referred to as "Truth's triumphal car." Now these Reorganized Mormons declare that they are the true followers of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and their claim has been upheld more than once by the courts of the United States. Brigham Young, who led the Saints to Utah in 1847 and who had at least nineteen wives, they describe as a usurper who fastened polygamy on the church. This raises the question "Who introduced the doctrine of plural marriage among the Mormons?" If Joseph Smith did, then the Reorganized Mormons are not his true followers, for they reject polygamy. The evidence shows that towards the end of his career Joseph Smith, like Mohammed, became a polygamist, but was too timid openly to make polygamy a doctrine of the Mormon Church. One fragment of the evidence may be given. Eliza Snow, one of Brigham Young's wives, wrote a



"Biography of Lorenzo Snow," her brother. In this book she says: "The prophet Joseph had taught me the principle of plural or celestial marriage and I was married to him for time and eternity. In consequence of the ignorance of most of the saints, as well as people of the world, on this subject, it was not mentioned, only privately between the few whose minds were enlightened on the subject." In 1852 there was published by the Mormon Church a "Revelation on the eternity of the marriage covenant, including plurality of wives. Given through Joseph the seer, in Nauvoo, Hancock county, Illinois, July 12th, 1843." This document, too long to quote, is pronounced a forgery by the Reorganized Mormon Church, yet it is quite in Joseph's style, it agrees with his own practice, and the allusions in it to his first wife, Emma, are very natural. For instance: "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph . . . and again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses." One purpose, in fact, of the message is obviously to make Emma keep quiet, and who but Joseph

would have so useful a revelation? The doctrine of plural marriage was introduced by Joseph Smith (though secretly), because he liked the practice of it and so did other Mormon elders — but how were women to be won over? First, of course, by telling them that it was a revelation from God, and secondly, by telling them that by marrying a Mormon elder, they gained a sure passport to heaven.

A woman's point of view in the matter of polygamy is expressed in a book which is perhaps the best antidote to Mormonism in existence. The writer, Mrs. Stenhouse, was the wife of a Mormon elder and she published her experiences under the title "Tell it All," or "An Englishwoman in Utah." Mrs. Stenhouse became a Mormon in 1849 while in England. Soon after, there came rumours of polygamy among the Mormons in America, but their missionaries vehemently contradicted these charges. For example, John Taylor, a Mormon apostle, said at a public meeting in France in reference to the accusations of polygamy, "These things are too outrageous to admit of belief." At the time he uttered these words,

he had four wives living in Salt Lake City. Mr. and Mrs. Stenhouse settled in Utah about 1857, but left the Mormon Church about the year 1870, having had enough of its despotism and absurdity. Another account of Mormon polygamy may be found in "New America," by Hepworth Dixon, who visited Salt Lake City in 1867 and was entertained by Brigham Young and other prominent Mormons. "In my opinion," Dixon wrote, "Mormonism is not a religion for women, it lowers her in the social scale. . . . The Mormon women know very little and feel an interest in very few things." "Women at Salt Lake City are made to keep their place." Dixon also gives an interesting opinion about Joseph Smith. "Had Smith," he says, "lived long enough for the facts of his career to become known, many persons think that among a people keenly alive to humour, he would have found no lasting dupes."

Owing to the intervention of the United States Government, the Utah Mormons gave up polygamy, officially in 1890. Yet it has been stated by non-Mormons that unofficially it is still prac-

tised and would probably be revived openly if the Saints gained sufficient political power.

The first converts to Mormonism outside America were for the most part English and Welsh Methodists. Times were bad in England in the middle of the last century, hence the promise of lands and houses in this world, as well as salvation in the next, won many to the new sect. Some were drawn to Utah by the announcement that God was about to destroy the Gentile or non-Mormon world, and that safety could only be found in the valley of the Salt Lake. The prosperity of the Mormons in Utah was due first of all to their own industry, and secondly to the discovery of gold in California about 1849. This brought thousands to the West, and gave the Mormons a market for their produce.

Mormons are very ready to quote the Bible in support of their doctrines. They regard the Bible, however, as if it were a Chinese picture, that is, with no perspective — all is viewed on the same level. They do not realize that though God is the same, man's knowledge of God is different from

generation to generation — Jeremiah, for example, had a greater and wider knowledge of God than Samuel. Even if we follow them in the foolish habit of quoting isolated Bible texts, some of their principles can be refuted by texts. We read for instance, in 1 Timothy, chapter 3, verse 2: "The bishop must be the husband of one wife"; yet the Mormon bishop, Lee, who was executed for his share in the Mountain Meadows massacre, had 18 wives.

George Townsend concludes his book on the "Conversion of Mormons" with these words: "We believe that the preaching in Utah of the historic gospel and of a more reasonable and spiritual faith will put to shame the old Mormonism and compel further eliminations and further substitutions. The Latter Day Saints have an admiration for the good and true as well as other men, and if the lives of our church people are more clean and kind than those of the Mormon people, if our ministers are more courageous and intelligent than the Mormon ministers, if our church has in it more of the idealism and heroism of Jesus than the Mormon system, if our religion



gives purer light to the soul in its aspirations after the Divine than does the Mormon religion, then there will be little need to decry Mormonism, for its eclipse will be manifest to all seeing eyes and it will stand convicted and condemned by the minds and consciences of its own votaries."

## V

### CHRIST THE WORD

NEARLY five hundred years before Christ, there lived in Ephesus, a philosopher, by name Heracleitus. He is described as having been "above all men, of a lofty and arrogant spirit." When found one day by his fellow citizens playing dice with some children in the temple of Artemis or Diana, he said to them, "Is it not better to do this than to meddle with public affairs in *your* company?" Such remarks secured for Heracleitus the solitude which he desired. In his own time, he was called "the obscure," and as only fragments of his writings remain, he is now more obscure than ever. The essence of his teaching was that "all things flow, nothing abides," and Heracleitus is coming to his own again for this is also the essence of the teaching of Monsieur Bergson, the most famous of modern philosophers. M. Bergson speaks of life as a great movement,

carrying us along in its course, as an unceasing becoming which preserves the past and creates the future, he teaches, in short that reality is a flowing. According to Heracleitus, this flowing of all things is unified and guided by the Logos. (Logos is a Greek word which may be translated either "thought" or the utterance of thought, namely "word.")

"This Logos," he wrote, "is always existent, but men fail to understand it . . . for although all things happen through this Logos, men seem as if they had no acquaintance with it." Again, "Although the Logos is universal most men live as though they had a private intelligence of their own."

"Men are at variance with the Logos which is their most constant companion."

Again, "Wisdom is one thing, it is to know the thought by which all things through all are guided."

About two hundred years after Heracleitus the Stoic School of Philosophy was founded at Athens, by Zeno. The Stoics are mentioned in the seventeenth chapter of Acts and it is worth noticing

that two heads of this school came from Tarsus, the city of St. Paul.

The head of the Stoic school after Zeno, its founder, was Cleanthes; he had been a pugilist and was once arrested by the Athenian police for having no visible means of support.

In his hymn to Zeus, written about 300 B. C., Cleanthes sings of a single everlasting Logos, "This," he says, "all the wicked seek to shun, unhappy men, who ever longing to obtain good, see not, nor hear God's universal law, which wisely heeded would assure them noble life. They haste away however, heedless of good, one here, one there, some showing unholy zeal in strife for honour, some turning recklessly toward gain, others to looseness and the body's pleasures."

Three hundred years after Cleanthes and this time in Alexandria, the city of Apollos, a Jew called Philo, wrote once more of the Logos in these terms.

"The Father who created the universe has given to his . . . most ancient Word a pre-eminent gift to stand on the confines of both and separate that which had been created from the crea-

tor. And this same Word is continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race which is exposed to affliction and misery and is also the ambassador sent by the ruler of all to the subject race."

Within the lifetime of Philo, Jesus of Nazareth lived in Palestine, there is no evidence however that Philo ever even heard of Him.

So in Asiatic Ephesus, in European Athens, in African Alexandria, men wrote of the Logos up to the time of Christ. The Logos did not mean exactly the same to all of them, to Heracleitus it meant the unifying principle of the world process, to the Stoics, it meant the universal reason which makes nature orderly, to Philo it meant the mediating principle between God and the world; the idea of the Logos was however common in those centuries.

About the year 100 A. D., the author of the fourth Gospel took the Logos-idea into Christianity, used it as a bridge, someone has said, by which Christianity might march into the heart of the Greek world, and, according to tradition, it was in Ephesus, the city of Heracleitus, that St. John



wrote "In the beginning was the Word or Logos, — and the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us."

This identification of Jesus Christ with the Logos has been called "The most important step that was ever taken in the domain of Christian doctrine." By it Jesus of Nazareth was declared to be the manifestation in time and space of the ruling principle of all things, to be in fact the *utterance* of the Life which is eternal.

## VI

### THE VALUE OF DEATH

A JOURNALIST tells of travelling in France some years ago and finding in a village an innkeeper who was a man of one subject — Death. He could not understand how people were able to **be interested in anything else**. When the journalist returned a few weeks later, the innkeeper knew his subject better — for he was dead. This man was probably avoided on account of his morbid conversation and yet he may have been more sane than his neighbours after all: for no silence and no sentiment can prevent death. It is the one quite certain experience for everyone. Indeed, it may be said that all religions owe their existence to these two things, the certainty of death and the uncertainty of everything else. Religions show the attempt to find something *fixed* in the midst of change and death.

Change and decay in all around I see  
O Thou who changest not  
Abide with me.

is an appeal from all religions. Buddhism is the exception which proves this rule, for Buddhism teaches that the search for something fixed is vain and therefore total extinction should be man's goal.

Death is the one certainty and yet in spite of its certainty, the thought of death has very little practical effect upon us. We seem to have a great faculty for suppressing disagreeable ideas.

One of Christ's most famous stories is on this forgetfulness of death. It is about a man who planned a prosperous future for himself and died the same night. In making up his accounts, he had left death out. The famous series of cartoons known as "The Dance of Death" is prompted by the same observation: that we are inclined to leave Death out of account. In these pictures Death is shown coming to all classes of men and women just when he is not expected and not wanted.

But the fact of death is now being forced upon the world and the questions grow more insistent. Do the dead survive? What does death mean?

In speculating on the question of survival and happiness after death, some are impressed by the analogy of birth, the event most like death of those we know. Birth is a death to one kind of life, but also an entrance into another. Man, it is argued, lives not once but three times: the first stage of his life is continual sleep, the second sleeping and waking by turns; the third, waking for ever. In the first stage, he lives in the dark alone, in the second stage he lives, associated with, yet separated from his fellowmen, in the third, his life is interwoven with the life of other spirits. In the first stage, his body develops itself from its germ, working out organs for the second stage; in the second stage, his mind develops itself from its germ, working out organs for the third stage. The act of leaving the first stage for the second, we call birth, that of leaving the second for the third, we call death. Our way from the second to the third, the way of death, is not darker, it is argued, than our way from the first to the second, the way

of birth. One way leads us forth to see the world outwardly, the other, perhaps, to see it inwardly. And just as the infant, though alive before its birth, is blind and deaf to the light and music of this world, so, it is argued, are we, though alive, blind and deaf to the light and music and freedom of the world whose entrance is Death.<sup>1</sup>

Then there are those who say that they have penetrated this other world, that they have here and now communicated with the dead and many of those who believe this cannot be called feeble-minded or fraudulent.

Most men, perhaps, have a reasonable certainty of survival after death, but not a scientific certainty, the evidence, from the necessity of the case, awaits verification, it seems to them more in accordance with a rational scheme of things that men should survive death than not. This is the poet's argument. Nature is a rational system, an intelligible order. Shall man, he asks,

“Man her last work, who seemed so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,

<sup>1</sup> “On Life after Death”—Fechner.



Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer "  
Shall man " who suffered countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just  
Be blown about the desert dust  
Or sealed within the iron hills."

This argument reminds us that belief in survival and happiness after death is a consequence of belief in God and in God's justice. That is the way in which the Jews arrived at the belief. It grew strong in a time of persecution. The sufferings of their martyrs in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (170 B. C.) compelled them to believe in future happiness for the dead, otherwise God was not fair, there was no justice in the ordering of the Universe. God must be still their God and God is not a God of the dead but of the living. If God exists, they argued, those who were the instruments of his purpose could never cease to exist.

And the Christian belief developed from the Jewish, fortified by the Resurrection of Christ. The belief of the Christians in the Resurrection

of Christ taught them that the Christian life is God's purpose and therefore it triumphs over death. The Christian life, the life of one united to God's purpose, the life of one who does God's will, is eternal, that is the Christian faith. Other ways of life may survive death, it is not certain that they will be everlasting, the Christian way of life is the only *real* way of life and therefore the only *eternal* way of life. Eternal life is, perhaps, a moral achievement. "In your endurance," said Christ, "ye shall win your souls."

If the important thing be a certain way of life, of conduct, which is eternal because it is the Divine way of life, then death has a meaning and a value. It helps this way of life. Death seems to be essential for the education of man's spirit. The spirit of man, we know it well these years, has risen to its greatest height in the very presence of natural death and we have the amazing paradox of Christianity that the highest revelation of God is a Man willingly dying on a cross. This idea, the value, the necessity of Death, for the moral life is developed in a striking way in an unfinished novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

"What a blessing to mortals," a character in this novel says, "what a kindness of Providence that life is made so uncertain; that death is thrown in among the possibilities of our being; that these awful mysteries are here around us into which we must vanish. For without it, how would it be possible to be heroic, how should we plod along in commonplaces for ever, never risking anything? For my part," he goes on, "I think that men are more favoured than the angels and made capable of greater heroism, greater virtue, and a more excellent spirit than they, because we have such a mystery of grief and terror around us; whereas they, being in the certainty of God's light, seeing his goodness and his purposes more perfectly, cannot be so brave as poor weak men have the opportunity of being and sometimes make use of it. God gave the whole world to man, and if he is left alone with it, it will make a clod of him at last; but to remedy that God gave man a grave and it redresses all and makes an immortal spirit of him in the end." <sup>2</sup>

In this passage Hawthorne suggests that Death

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Edward Caird's "Balliol Addresses."

may be the great guardian, the great inspirer of the moral, the heroic, the Divine life.

Furthermore it is death that gives dignity to even the most ignoble, to even the most fashionable life. Every life is redeemed from littleness when we remember that Death awaits it. At the moment of death each one of the crowd is left at last with himself alone, the prompters are gone, he or she must at last be entirely real and unaffected. In itself we can imagine death to be a purgatory, a cleansing, a restoration to real values, a startling reminder that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, nor in his position in society, but in what he is in himself alone. This is the dignity of Death, the dignity which death gives to even the meanest and most ignoble lives. In death, man, perhaps for the first time, meets with himself and with the values not of the world, but of God.

So, then, if moral values are the only eternal values and if death be necessary in order to hold us to these values, then, perhaps Socrates was

right when he suggested that death may be the greatest of all goods to man, for Death is the opportunity of greatest victory to man's unconquerable spirit.



## VII

### THE RELIGIOUS OPINIONS OF DEAN SWIFT

**S**WIFT seems to have decided that whatever else he might be called, he would never be called a saint; there is little doubt that he deliberately showed his worst side to the world; no description fits him so well as Bolingbroke's "a hypocrite reversed." He professed to be a misanthrope. "Principally," he wrote to the poet Pope, "I hate and detest that animal called 'man.' The chief end and purpose to myself in all my labors is to vex the world rather than divert it."

He once suggested that now and then beasts may degenerate into men. And yet Addison sent him "Travels in Italy" inscribed to "Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable of companions, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age," and when he was Dean of St. Patrick's he helped the poor of Dublin with generous and judicious care. He described himself as

“ A clergyman of special note  
For shunning those of his coat.”

Yet he wrote often and at length in defence of the clergy against unjust attacks and inadequate salaries. The attacks he met by reminding his readers that the clergy were taken from the laity, there was no other material available; it was not surprising, considering their origin, that some vices still clung to them.

Much that Swift wrote is coarse and indelicate, but it is worth noticing that he nearly always makes indecency and vice either disgusting or ridiculous, and no criticism of him is fair which neglects his chronic physical ailment, his loneliness, and his knowledge that he was going mad. “ At best,” he once said, “ I have an ill head and an aching heart.”

It is his morbid dread of being thought pious or benevolent, it is his revolting realism which makes Swift's religion of special interest. The religion of one who is always feeling that he must “ set an example ” is seldom interesting — even as a farce. There is no “ keeping up appear-

ances" in the religion of Swift. He tried, in fact, to prevent any appearance at all. He refused to let his light shine before men.

It is possible, however, to deduce his position from some of his writings. A few of his sermons are published: "*On the Trinity*," "*On Mutual Subjection*," "*On the Testimony of Conscience*," "*On Brotherly Love*" (a curious subject for Swift to choose); "*On Doing Good*," (A Sermon on the Occasion of Wood's Project), "*On the Excellency of Christianity in Opposition to Heathen Philosophy*," "*On False Witness*," "*On the Poor Man's Contentment*," "*On the Causes of the Wretched Condition of Ireland*," "*On Sleeping in Church*."

Swift thought very little of these productions himself. "Here," he said to Dr. Sheridan, "are a bundle of my old sermons. You may have them if you please. They may be of use to you; they have never been of any to me." According to Mrs. Pilkington's memoirs, he once said to her husband: "I never preached but twice in my life, and then they were not sermons but pamphlets." Mrs. Pilkington asked him what might be the sub-

ject of them. He told her they were against Wood's half-pence. Swift never formed the habit of magnifying his ecclesiastical performances. *O si sic omnes*. His *Thoughts on Religion* have also been preserved and, in addition, a few letters and essays on the clerical profession and the Christian faith.

From these remains it appears that Swift considered the Incarnation to be the essence of Christianity.

"Since the union of Divinity and Humanity," he wrote, "is the great article of our religion, it is odd to see some clergymen in their writings of Divinity wholly devoid of humanity."

How this union was effected and how there could be three persons in one God were questions to which Swift offered no answer. He may never have read Bishop Butler's sermon *On the Ignorance of Man*. He would at any rate have entirely approved of that discourse.

All of Swift's doctrinal statements might be said to be on the text, "We see but in part and we know but in part."

As he expressed it in his *Letter to a Young*

*Clergyman:* "For my part, having considered the matter impartially, I can see no great reason which those gentlemen you call the free thinkers can have for their clamor against religious mysteries, since it is plain that they were not invented by the clergy, to whom they bring no profit nor acquire any honor; for every clergyman is ready **either to tell us the utmost he knows, or to confess that he does not understand them; nor is it strange that there should be mysteries in divinity as well as in the commonest operations of nature.**" Along with this emphasis on mystery in religion there is that "appeal to reason" which is so characteristic of the eighteenth century. "A plain, convincing reason," he wrote, "may possibly operate upon the mind both of a learned and ignorant hearer as long as they live, and will edify a thousand times more than the art of wetting the handkerchiefs of a whole congregation, if you were sure to attain it." "I do not see how this talent of moving the passions can be of any great use towards directing Christian men in the conduct of their lives, at least in these northern climates, where I am confident the strongest eloquence of



that kind will leave few impressions upon any of our spirits deep enough to last to the next morning, or rather to the next meal." He told with approval of a man who made it a rule in reading to skip over all sentences where he saw a note of admiration at the end.

Swift is not often thought of as a *Pastor parvorum*, yet he had very definite ideas on what the "life and doctrine" of the clergy should be.

In the *Letter to a Young Clergyman* already referred to, he makes a suggestive remark on the use of heathen philosophers: "Before you enter into the common insufferable cant of taking all occasions to disparage the heathen philosophers, I hope you will differ from some of your brethren, by first inquiring what those philosophers can say for themselves."

He thought the clergy spent too much time with each other. "In my humble opinion," he wrote, "the clergy's business lies entirely among the laity; neither is there perhaps a more effectual way to forward the salvation of men's souls than for spiritual persons to make themselves as agreeable as they can in the conversations of the world,

for which a learned education gives them great advantage, if they would please to improve and apply it. . . . Let some reasoners think what they please, it is certain that men must be brought to esteem and love the clergy before they can be persuaded to be in love with religion."

With this end in view, he suggested that the clergy — except the bishops — should dress like other men.

He must have excepted the bishops owing to the speechless awe with which he professed to regard them.

"It is happy for me," he wrote to the Bishop of Clogher, "that I know the persons of very few bishops, and it is my constant rule never to look into a coach, by which I avoid the terror that such a sight would strike me with."

Among the defenders of Christianity, Swift occupies a peculiar place. He presents no apology, but satirizes "free thinkers" and their methods.

His *Argument to prove that the abolishing of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some inconveniences and perhaps not produce those many good effects proposed*

*thereby* is an excellent example of restrained irony. He explains that he is only defending *nominal* Christianity, *real* Christianity "having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power." Of church services he asks: "Where are there so many conveniences and incitements to sleep?" Why then abolish them? As to the clergy: "What an advantage and felicity it is for great wits to be always provided with objects of scorn and contempt in order to exercise and improve their talents," and "If Christianity were once abolished how could the free thinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning be able to find another subject so calculated in all points whereon to display their abilities? What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those whose genius by continual practice hath been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion?" "Nor do I think it wholly groundless," he goes on, "or my fears wholly imaginary that the abolishing of Christianity may perhaps bring the Church into danger." "Furthermore," he argues, "the abo-

lition of Christianity might disoblige the allies who were all Christians"—the argument was written during Marlborough's campaigns. Finally he offers, as an amendment, that instead of the word "Christianity" may be put "religion in general" as a thing to be abolished. "For of what use is freedom of thought if it will not produce freedom of action, which is the sole end, how remote soever in appearance of all objections against Christianity."

Swift consistently maintained this doctrine, now so unpopular, that in their opposition to Christianity, men propose no other end than that of fortifying themselves and others against the reproaches of a vicious life. "It being necessary for men of libertine practices to embrace libertine principles or else they cannot act in consistence with any reason, or preserve any peace of mind." "Whether such authors have this design, this much is certain," he acutely remarks, "that no other use is made of such writings." So he insists on finding out from what quarter objections to religion come. "If any man," he argued, "should write a book against the lawfulness of punishing felony with

death, and upon inquiry the author should be found in Newgate under condemnation for robbing a house, his arguments would not very unjustly lose much of their force from the circumstances he lay under. So, when Milton wrote his "Book of Divorces," it was presently rejected as an occasional treatise, because everybody knew he had a shrew for his wife. Neither can there be any reason imagined why he might not, after he was blind, have writ another upon the danger and inconvenience of eyes."

I think it was Mr. Asquith who said that free-thought was incurably sloppy and had better be named loose-thought. Swift held that free-thought was no thought at all. The faith of Christians he considered, was but as a grain of mustard seed compared with the faith of those "free-thinkers" who accepted the absurdities of certain anti-Christian books in order to confirm themselves in their perverted tastes. His conclusion is that those who are against religion must needs be fools, and therefore we read in Exodus that of all animals God refused the first born of an ass.







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